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Examining the relationship between sensitivity to rejection and using Facebook in university students

Hojjat.A Farahani^{a*}, Somayeh Aghamohamadi^b, Zeynab Kazemi^b,Firoozeh Bakhtiarvand^c, Mojtaba Ansari^d

^aPhD Psychology, Tehran University, Tehran, Iran; ^bMA Psychology, Isfahan University, Isfahan, Iran; ^cMA Educational Technology, Azad University, Tehran, Iran; ^dMSC, Tehran Science and Research University, Tehran, Iran

Abstract

Background: Rejection sensitive persons expect others to reject them, readily interpret ambiguous interpersonal cues as rejection, and overreact to rejection, real or imagined (Downey & Feldman, 1996). Thus they used Computer-Mediated Communication for Communicate with others. **Purpose of Study:** this research is aimed at examining the relationship between rejection sensitivity and using Facebook social site. **Methods:** 265 students from Azad university of Isfahan (162 Female & 103 Male) were chosen using convenience sampling. Scales this study was Farsi form of Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (RSQ) (Downey & Feldman, 1996). For assessment "Using Facebook" was used Demography questionnaire. **Findings and Results:** The findings of current study indicated that sensitive to rejection has a positive and significant relation with use of Facebook. **Conclusions:** In Virtual world, relation with others is very easy than the Physical co-presence. Thus people that have sensitive to rejection, use Computer-Mediated Communication and Facebook for Communicate with others.

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Key word: Sensitive to Rejection, Relationship, Facebook, University Students;

1. Introduction

Internet communication is one of the most important achievements in communication-information technology revolution which have caused transformation in social interactions. In the real world, physical co-presence is considered a discriminating aspect of interaction and relationship, so, relationship means personal communication among people (Riva & Galimberti, 1998). One kind of relationship in which fear of rejection exists noticeably is interpersonal and intergroup interactions (Shelton & Richeson, 2005; Shelton, Richeson, & Bergsieker, 2009). Intergroup interactions (compared to between-group interactions) basically lead to distressed, difficult, immature, unsuitable relationships (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2008; Trawalter, Richeson, & Shelton, 2009; Trawalter, & Richeson, 2008; Richeson, & Trawalter, 2005; Vorauer, & Sakamoto, 2006) and these sorts of problems cause fear of rejection(Shapiro, Baldwin, Williams, & Trawalter, 2011). However, communications in virtual world have two features: first, by breaking through the established group limits, puts the most impact on individual. Second,

* Hojjat. A Farahani. Tel.: ++98211727491; fax: ++982188281515

E-mail address: icphaf@yahoo.com.

anonymity and fake names i.e. hiding the personal identity which is common and likely in internet communications affects the importance of group bordering (Jones, 1998).

Because of increasing growth of interaction virtual space, Rheinold in 1993 and Turkle in 1995, as first researcher in the field of communications, decided to provide a studying field about advantages and disadvantages in virtual world (Morahan-Martin, & Schumacher, 2003). One of the negative points that researchers have pointed out is that using internet has gradually replaced the real relationship of people in daily life. These researchers believe that internet by providing virtual space for making relationships, spares people from the trouble of facing with others and being put in a real world situation (Mohseni, Doran, & Sohrabi, 2005). Researches show that users that use internet less, have move suitable and meaningful relationship with their mother and friends, compared to those who use internet for larger times. These results show a probability of existing a relationship between the kind of social relationships and the rate of using internet (Sanders, Tiffany, Field, & Kaplan, 2000). Also in Iran, researches done on relationships in virtual space and feeling of loneliness show a significant negative correlation between feeling of loneliness and chatting on the internet (Mashayekh, & Borjali, 2002). Also, a study shows that perceived social support directly predicts using internet negatively (Salimi, Jokar, & Nikpur, 2008). In recent years, social interactions in virtual space has become more possible than ever. Existing social sites are the best possible way for making relationship in virtual world. Facebook is a social site inaugurated by its young inventor, Mark Zuckerberg, in February, 2004 (Moyle, 2004). According to statistics, Facebook soon after its establishment became one of the most acclaimed social Web-site in world (Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfield, 2006). But in the virtual world such as Facebook social site, individuals don't need to reveal their real identity and a person who is sensitive to rejection can easily deal with social interactions, without worry and negative feeling of rejection. The results of research have shown that timid individuals use more time on using Facebook than non-timid individual (Orr, Sisic, Ross, Simmering, Arseneault, & Orr, 2009). Furthermore, individuals who suffer from social anxiety, prefer interaction in internet environments to face-to-face interactions (Sheldon, 2008; Ebeling-Witte, Frank, & Lester, 2007). A research done by Ryan & Xenos (2011) showed that one of the characteristics of Facebook user are their timidity. In the current research, rejection sensitivity construct has been used for assessing anxiety and worry of Facebook users.

The construct of rejection sensitivity has been formulated by Feldman's and Downey in 1996. This construct represents anxiety to rejection from other (e.g. family, friends, spouse) and is formed based on special personality characteristics. Individuals who are sensitive to rejection expect that others will reject them in group and society. They easily interpret ambiguous interpersonal situations as being rejected from others and show negative reaction to their real or imagined feeling (Downey & Feldman's, 1996). Regarding the previous researches, it seems that relationship in virtual space is a suitable solution for users who are worried about making successful relationship with and rejection from others, so that they can experience social communications without negative feelings about rejection. Therefore, this research is aimed at examining the relationship between rejection sensitivity and using Facebook social site.

1. Method

1.1. participant

Participants in this research included 265 B.A. students (162 Females and 103 males) studying in Azad Universities in Isfahan in the educational year 2010-2011. Average age of these students was 21 years old and its standard deviation was 2.3. this sample was selected by randomly sampling.

2.2. Instruments

2.2.1. Reject Sensitivity Questionnaire (RSQ)

In this research, rejection sensitivity questionnaire (RSQ; Feldman's & Downey, 1996) containing 8 items was used to assess rejection sensitivity. RSQ shows feeling of rejection from other (e.g. Friends, Family and Spouse). This questionnaire was first translated in to Farsi. Then its face validity was confirmed by 5 professors of psychology. Items 8 was omitted because of its contradiction with Iranian- Islamic culture. Therefore the

questionnaire finally contained 7 items and was arranged liker 5 choices. For determining the reliability of the questionnaire Cronbach's alpha was used and it was shown that the questionnaire had a suitable reliability ($\alpha=.84$).

2.2.2. Using Facebook

For assessing the rate of using Facebook, researcher-made Demographic questionnaire was used. Participants were first asked if they were a member of social sites or not? If they answered yes, then the rate of their daily and last week use of Facebook was asked.

2. Result

The results showed that Users use this site for an average of 12.2 hours per week and 1.39 hours per day.

Table 1: Pearson's correlation coefficient for relationship between rejection sensitivity and rate of using Facebook

Variable	M		SD		Correlation Coefficient	P
	User	Non-User	User	Non-User		
Sensitive to Rejection	102.3	94.3	3.52	2.81	.46	.001
Rate of using in per week	12.2 h	-	-	-	-	-

Table 2: Independent t test results for the comparison between rejection sensitivity in users and non-users

	Group						
Variable	User		Non-User		t	df	P
	M	S	M	S			
Sensitive to Rejection	102.3	3.53	94.3	2.81	5.32	263	.001

Independent t test results for the comparison between male users and female users showed that there is no significant difference in their rejection sensitivity ($P=.089$).

3. Conclusion

The goal of this research is to examine the relationship between rejection sensitivity and the rate of using Facebook. The findings drawn from statistical analyses show that rejection sensitivity is positively and significantly correlated with the rate of using Facebook. Also, the results of independent t- test show that the rate of rejection sensitivity in Facebook users is significantly higher than those who were not members of Facebook. But there is no significant difference in rejection sensitivity between males and females. for explaining these findings it can be said

that , as findings of previous researches has shown , individuals who feel worried, anxious , timid and lonely in making relationships, will resort to virtual world (Ryan & Xenos , 2011; Orr et al,2009). Regarding the definition of rejection sensitivity, these individuals will enter the relationships in virtual environments in order not to be rejected with their real identity form others and in this virtual world, they will get rid of the anxiety of rejection. One limitation in this research is that the examined sample were students of university, therefore it is suggested to repeat with non- student sample.

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